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국제학석사학위논문

## **Can China be a Large Singapore?**

중국의 싱가포르 모델 적용에 대한 연구

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# **Can China be a Large Singapore?**

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## **Abstract**

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The primary concern of the thesis is to study if China has the conditions to adopt the 'Singapore Model'. Despite interest and extensive research from China, the lack of consensus on the definition of the 'Singapore Model' and the cherry picking of certain components while failing to look at the fundamentals that allowed Singapore to become what she is today meant that the extant literature on the topic remains incomplete. Acknowledging the shortcomings, this research proposes the use of the analytical framework that defines the 'Singapore Model' with the fundamental values of Meritocracy, Multiracialism, Integrity, Rule of Law and Equality to understand foundations of Singapore and the Singapore Story.

First of all, the 'Singapore Model' will be applied to understand the conditions and challenges that Singapore encountered in the 1950s/1960s and how it allowed Singapore to achieve what she is today. Secondly, the conditions that permitted Singapore to implement the 'Singapore Model' would then be compared to the current phenomena of China to examine if she has the potential to adopt the 'Singapore Model' and become a large Singapore. Lastly, a roadmap to adopt the model will be proposed.

While comparing Singapore of the 1950s/1960s and China today, the analysis showed that both countries have strikingly similar socioeconomic and political conditions.

Though the analysis might depict that China today have the conditions to implement the 'Singapore Model', her size and the political will remain as the key differences and potential stumbling block for China to do so.

Knowingly, the size for China is a double-edged sword; a tradeoff between benefits of being large (bigger market, greater international influence and etc.) and drawbacks of the heterogeneity of preferences. Nevertheless, twenty-first century authoritarian elites in China are well positioned to manage the negatives and capitalize from her size in the implementation of the top-down 'Singapore Model'.

Therefore, with the socioeconomic and political conditions that are similar to Singapore in the 1950s/1960s, and potentially, China's large size as a plus, it would mean that if the Chinese Communist Party leadership has the political will to implement the 'Singapore Model', then China can be a large Singapore.

By observing at the fundamentals of the 'Singapore Model' and the conditions needed to implement them, this research departs from existing literature through providing a more comprehensive picture to whether China have the potential to undertake those fundamentals and become a large Singapore.

**Keywords**

China, Equality, Integrity, Meritocracy, Multiracialism, Rule of Law, Singapore, Singapore Model, Size

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# 1 Introduction

In November 1978, then Senior Vice-Premier of the People's Republic of China, Deng Xiaoping, made his first and only official visit to Singapore (National Library Board Singapore, 2014). Hosted by then-Prime Minister of Singapore Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, he explained in detail with regard to the development of the country, its open policy and the various measures for attracting foreign investments (Suzhou Industrial Park Administrative Committee, 2004). Amazed at Singapore's modernity, good social order and discipline, Mr. Deng (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Singapore, 2012) concluded that: "We (China) should draw from their (Singapore's) experiences, and do even better than them".

Since then, thousands of Communist officials and bureaucrats had gone on official business and study tours to learn from Singapore's experiences (Buckley, 2015). Even the Chinese President Xi Jinping, before taking office, had led an investigating team to Singapore (Fensom, 2012) to study the possibility of adapting the 'Singapore Model'.

With the 'Singapore Model' drawing sustained interest from the Chinese Communist Party, the research question raised for this thesis is to study if China can be a large Singapore. More concretely, this thesis would explore and examine if China have similar conditions as Singapore had in the past, then she would possess the potential to adopt the 'Singapore Model' that will enable her to modernize from the Third World to the First World.

This paper will conduct a literature review on previous research findings on the

'Singapore Model', China's interest in the 'Singapore Model' and Chinese discourse on the adaptation of the 'Singapore Model'. Next, this paper will utilize the Analytical Framework that define the 'Singapore Model' with the concepts of Meritocracy, Equality, Rule of Law, Integrity and Multiracialism in place. In the first part of the analysis, a qualitative historical research would be used to study the socioeconomic and political conditions of Singapore in the 1950s/1960s and mechanics of the 'Singapore Model'. In the second part of the analysis, a comparative research approach would be applied to compare the socioeconomic and political conditions of Singapore in the 1950s/1960s and China today. The study into the conditions that China face today would be a indicator to whether China today have the potential to become a large Singapore. Also, a roadmap for China to adopt the 'Singapore Model' will be proposed.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 What is the Singapore Model?

Previous studies on Singapore and the 'Singapore Model' had been polarized. One school of thought advocated that the 'Singapore Model' was just a developmental state model that was focused solely on economic growth. Another school of thought held differing views that the 'Singapore Model' was more than just the sole pursuit of economic growth, but social stability, racial integration, social justice and etc.

#### 2.1.1 Singapore Model as a Developmental State Model

Since her independence in 1965, Singapore transformed herself from being colonial backwaters outpost to an economic powerhouse today. According to Pereira (2008), Singapore's status as an economic powerhouse today was because of the developmental state model that it had been following. Originated from Chalmers Johnsons (1982), the concept of the developmental state was first term coined to explain the state-led economic miracle in Japan. Prioritizing economic development, a developmental state was characterized by having a strong state's intervention into the market - either through market regulation or market planning.

Despite being one of the world's freest economies, Singapore is characterized as a developmental state due to the continued dominance by government-linked companies (Temasek Holdings and GIC Private Limited) and multi-national corporations. Controlling the key sectors of the economy, the Singaporean state has been able to exploit the market power while suppressing labor activism and other dissidents. However, Pereira noted that the strong state's control of pluralism has had a negative impact on

innovation and is becoming an obstacle to sustainable development in Singapore. With the widening income gap and rising living costs, the sustainability of such a developmental state capitalism has been questioned by Singaporeans in the recent 2011 General Elections where the People's Action Party saw a decline in their popular vote.

### 2.1.2 Singapore Model as a Model more than Economics

While it is undeniable that Singapore achieved outstanding economic achievements in a matter of decades, there were much more to the economics of the Singapore Model than it seems. Singaporeans today enjoy social stability in a multi-ethnic country, with an equal opportunity to seek personal excellence in a country that is ranked happiest in Asia by the 2015 World Happiness Report (Tan, 2015).

As articulated by the incumbent Prime Minister of Singapore Mr Lee Hsien Loong, the 'Singapore Model' was Mr. Lee Kuan Yew's "noble dream of a multiracial, multi-religious nation" (Lee, 2015). The fundamental values that allowed Singapore and the founding Prime Minister Mr Lee Kuan Yew to succeed comprise multiracialism, equality, meritocracy, integrity, and the rule of law (Lee, 2015). The first principle, multiracialism, is one that accords equal status to all races. The second principle, meritocracy refers to a concept whereby societal advancements are based on individual ability and efforts. The third principle, the Rule of Law enacts that law should govern nations as opposed to arbitrary decisions by those in power. The fourth principle, integrity emphasizes on honesty and moral uprightness. The fifth and the last principle, equality is based on the element of being equal in status, rights, and opportunities.

According to Mahbubani (2015), he deconstructed the Singapore model as MPH - Meritocracy, Pragmatism and Honesty. He argued that any state would succeed if they



faithfully implement the ideals of Meritocracy, Pragmatism and Honesty, with Honesty the hardest to achieve. Meritocracy has ensured that only truly talented individuals run Singapore. Pragmatism has led Singapore to learn and imitate best practices from other countries, rather than shy away from assuming new policies that could potentially work. In fact, of the pragmatic policies that the Singapore Model adopts, Multiracialism is one of the essential, if not the most important policy that the Singapore Model embraces. This is because, equal treatment of all ethnic groups and their languages help to ensure ethnic harmony and prevent the Singaporean society from being torn apart by any ethnic strife. Honesty is to avoid impairment of integrity, virtues or moral principles at all levels of the society, even at the highest level of the governments. As such, the Singapore Model adopts the Rule of Law to uphold honesty and to ensure that no one is above the law.

Jayakumar (2015), in his book titled "Be at the table or be on the menu", highlighted the policies and principles that allowed Singapore to succeed through Meritocracy, Multiculturalism/Multiracialism, Integrity and Incorruptibility, Pursuit of Excellence, Law and Order, and constant Adaptation and Innovation. According to Jayakumar, the governments facilitate Meritocracy in Singapore in such a way that equal opportunities and a level playing field are created for every Singaporean to fulfill his potential on merit so long as he has the ability and willingness to work hard. Maintaining racial and religious harmony by avoiding the sidelining of minorities and giving them a stake in the country is an important cornerstone for Singapore Model. In fact, without Multiculturalism/Multiracialism, sectarian tensions and violence would have led to bloodshed and civil strife in the Singaporean society. Integrity and Incorruptibility is a top-down approach in Singapore whereby a clean and corruption-free government is established to ensure a clean and transparent economy and society. Integrity and Incorruptibility is also closely linked to Meritocracy as it provides people the trust and

confidence that the government officials exercise discretion based on merits and not on ground of bribery. Pursuit of Excellence is lauded as Singapore has been striving to uphold its treasured brand name. For a country of Singapore's size and limited natural resources, striving for excellence is necessary to remain relevant, competitive and is on the rise. Concurring to this, for Singapore to remain attractive, she must maintain safety and security for Singaporeans and foreigners through upholding law and order and enhancing its defenses. Lastly but not the least, Singapore needs to be adaptable and innovative in the volatile global environment while not arbitrarily change what has worked for her over the decades.

## 2.2 Chinese Interest in 'Singapore Model'

Since Deng Xiaoping's public comment to learn from Singapore in 1992, Chinese leadership had shown great interest in Singapore and her model of governance. The Chinese Communist Party's interest (Orthmann and Thompson, 2014) in the 'Singapore Model' can be summarized into three points: Economic Prosperity, Alternative to liberal democracy and Social stability in Chinese-majority multiracial populations.

Firstly, Singapore's economic success and experiences in avoiding the Middle Income trap caught the eyes of the Chinese leadership focused on pursuing economic growth. For a budding nation without hinterland and natural resources, crippled with problems of mass unemployment, housing shortages, Singapore has become an economic and financial powerhouse with one of the highest GDP per capita (US\$78,744) in a matter of decades (Lee, 1998). Therefore, the 'Singapore Model' potentially provides the Chinese leadership with a roadmap towards economic modernization.

Secondly, the 'Singapore Model' has presented the Chinese Communist Party a successful alternative to liberal democracy. Despite having quinquennial elections since 1959, the People's Action Party (PAP) is able to stay in power while maintaining "high efficiency, incorruptibility, and vitality" (Hartcher, 2012). Even with one of the freest and most vibrant economy, Singapore maintains a one party rule with draconian laws and the lack of political and civil rights (Khanna, 2015). In the eyes of the Chinese Communist Party, the 'Singapore Model' with only one ruling party since its inception is ideal for them. Party survival has been and will be the Chinese Communist Party's top priority. Therefore, the 'Singapore Model' of governance potentially offers the Chinese Communist Party a way to engage in reforms while staying in power.

Thirdly, Singapore's ability to maintain social stability with her multiracial, multi-language and multi-religious in a Chinese dominated population is attractive to a multi-ethnic China plagued by ethnic and social violence. With the recent spike in social unrest and separatist movements especially in the ethnic minorities region, social stability and territorial integrity problems have garnered the attention of the Chinese Communist Party. As such, it seems that the 'Singapore Model' potentially offers China the alternative to integrate its diverse population group, maintain law and order and defend its "core interests" (Campbell et al, 2013).

### 2.3 Chinese Discourse on the 'Singapore Model'

According to Orthmann (2012), Chinese leadership has been interested in the 'Singapore Model' and its experiences in avoiding the 'modernization trap' - where economic development contributed to democratization. With a majority population of Chinese and an efficiently organized, tightly regulated and a soft-authoritarian state, not only does the 'Singapore Model' act as a practical and ideological alternative to liberal democracy

(Orthmann and Thompson, 2014), the 'Singapore Model' in essence is perfection for what the Chinese view as their own developmental path.

Apparently, differences in size, economic development, history and ethnic composition and China's inadequate legal system as compared to Singapore, makes importation of the 'Singapore Model' into China seem improbable (Ortmann and Thompson, 2014). Nevertheless, Chinese scholars such as Pan Wei (2009) and Li and Wang (2014) posited that lessons should be learnt from the 'Singapore Model' and adapted into the 'China Model'. Conversely, Orthmann (2012) argued that the 'China Model' on comparison with the 'Singapore Model', lacks significant improvements and is actually just a resized version of the 'Singapore Model'.

According to Orthmann and Thompson (2014), the Chinese reformers have derived three elements of good governances from the 'Singapore Model' - fighting corruption, increasing professionalism and improving responsiveness - so as to stabilize one-party rule.

In China, corruption at all levels of the governments has impeded successful implementation of policies, increased arbitrariness of the governments and eroded CCP's legitimacy. As such, Singapore's success in minimizing corruption has been an envy of the Chinese observers. Rule of law in Singapore implies that even high-ranking officials are liable for graft investigation as seen in the inquiry of then Minister of National Development Mr Teh Cheang Wan (Peng, 2006). Additionally, Singapore governments also highlight the importance of the Confucian idea that moral leadership is a necessary condition for good governance (Zhou Bibo, 2005).

Professionalizing the party is one of the pillars in the 'Singapore Model'. Abiding by meritocracy, only the brightest and most capable people are selected to serve in the governments. Pan Wei (2009) viewed meritocracy as the backbone for China to be run by the governments dedicated to serve the welfare of the people and to maintain harmony which he termed as minbenism. Moving in tandem, Zheng Yongnian (2010) postulated that meritocracy and professionalization of the state can enhance the links to the society by attracting talents from all walks of life (enhancing legitimacy) and to combat corruption. Furthermore, the merit-based selection would attract civil servants not only in the eyes of economic benefits but also the desire to serve the community.

Many Chinese scholars argued that PAP's close links with the community has contributed to the ruling party. According to Sun (2005) and Wu (2009), grassroots activities and leading organizations such as the People's Association, Meet-the-People sessions and etc., have enabled PAP to stay connected and responsive to its constituents. As such, Wu (2009) suggested that CCP should follow the PAP's footsteps by strengthening its community outreach so as to enhance its ability to serve the people, thereby limiting criticisms of the party and enhancing its legitimacy. According to Orthmann and Thompson (2014), Chinese scholars noted that PAP's 'authoritarian elections' has also contributed to its responsiveness. According to Wang and Ran (1999) and Xiao (2004), PAP's effective dominance of elections through restriction of opposition parties, pork barrel politics and manipulation imply that elections posed minimal threat to its one-party rule while strengthening its legitimacy. As stated by Zheng (2010), dominated elections in Singapore also lead the PAP to the competitive selection of candidates through identifying the best candidates and subjecting them to the electoral process. Such selection and election process allow Singapore to ensure the quality of candidates in which democracy alone is unable to achieve. However, Xiao (2004) warned that

maintaining control of the elections for a country of China's size and diversity might be challenging.

### **3 Analytical Framework**

In a 1994 CNN interview with Fareed Zakaria (1994), Mr. Lee famously said: " It is my business to tell people not to foist their system indiscriminately on societies in which it will not work." Referring to the uniqueness of "Asian Values", Mr. Lee explained that Western-style Liberal Democracy was incompatible in the East. Going a step further in an interview in his later years, Mr. Lee had even said that "China is not going to become a liberal democracy; if it did, it would collapse (Allison, Blackwill & Wyne, 2013, p. 13)"

To have a "well-ordered society so that everyone can have maximum enjoyment of his freedom (Zakaria, 1994)" and have "an equal chance in life, in education, in health and in nutrition (Han & Lee, 2011)", Mr. Lee's solution for Singapore is the engagement of the 'Singapore Model' based on multiracialism, meritocracy, equality, integrity and the rule of law.

This paper will use the analytical framework based on the 'Singapore Model' which focuses on the fundamental values of multiracialism, meritocracy, equality, integrity, and the rule of law.

#### **3.1 Multiracialism**

Multiracialism is an "ideology that accords equal status to the cultures and ethnic identities of the various races that are regarded as comprising of a plural society (Hassan, 1976, p. 115)". This ideology requires the equality of political representation and the social acceptance of all races.

For a country with a diverse population profile like Singapore, there is always a "risk of the majority racial group assuming power without regard to the minority groups (Chan 2013, p. 84)". In 1964, Singapore learnt the lesson the hard way, as racial politics manifested into hate crimes and racial riots. Since then, multiracialism is a political necessity to maintain a cohesive society and the precursor to a common identity. Through cooperation, inclusion and respect for all races, Singapore is able to enjoy racial harmony and social stability.

### **3.2 Meritocracy**

In line with multiracialism, the 'Singapore Model' advocated a meritocratic system for a society based on justice and equality, regardless of race, religion or language.

Meritocracy is a political philosophy whereby societal advancements are based on individual ability and efforts (Arneson, 2015). In such a meritocratic society, 1) Equality of Opportunity (Formal & Substantive) is upheld and 2) rewards and remunerations are proportional to individual effort (Market).

With Equality of Opportunity as either the means to meritocracy or partly constitutive of it, achieving it would be key towards creating a Meritocratic society, both in formal and substantive forms.

Formal equality of opportunity (Arneson, 2015) stated that desired positions and posts with superior advantages must be open for everyone. Allocation of these positions is either done through merit assessments based on appropriate criteria or through fair competition where winners receive the superior advantages.



However, having only formal equality of opportunity whereby superior positions are judged fairly based on merits is insufficient. The presence of a substantive equality of opportunity (Arneson, 2015) is necessary so that everyone has a genuine opportunity to become qualified. As identified by John Rawls (2005) in "A Theory of Justice", social circumstances such as race, sex and social class affects one's ability to succeed in life. In order for everyone to have a fair opportunity to succeed, there is a need to limit the degree of material inequality and the unfair advantage it confers in competing for desirable positions (Butt, 2012).

In other words, if the principles of meritocracy are properly adhered to and are effectively implemented, then it would create a society whereby people are free from discriminations due to race, ethnicity, religion, sex and sexual orientation (Arneson, 2015).

### **3.3 Rule of Law**

In order to uphold equality of opportunity and meritocracy, there needs to be a fair system of rules that regulates the actions of its members. In the case of Singapore, its system is properly and fairly enforced legal arrangement.

As Aristotle articulated two thousands years ago, "The rule of law is better than that of any individual (United Nations Rule of Law, 2015)." The Rule of Law, also known as Nomocracy, is a legal principle that law should govern nations as opposed to arbitrary decisions by those in power. The Rule of law encompasses the concept of equality before the law (Carothers, 1998) - where no one is above the law.

Constructively, to uphold the Rule of Law and to prevent self-interested politicians from manipulating the law to their own benefits, the judiciary needs to be separated from other branches in the governments - a concept known as Judicial Independence.

As emphasized by French Philosopher Montesquieu, "the independence of the judiciary has to be real, and not apparent merely (Przeworski & Maravall, 2003, p 26)." To achieve judicial independence, separation of powers in the governments is necessary. This Separation of Powers (Ahmad & Fatima, 2013) creates a system of checks and balances whereby power is shared among different branches and separate branches are empowered to prevent actions by other branches. This system would prevent any part of the governments from amassing too much power and be insulated from improper influences. With the proper implementation and enforcement of the rule of law, individual rights, including those of property and contracts, would then create a framework that facilitates capitalism and economic growth (Zakaria, 1997). Without it, major economic institutions would not function and the government's role in the economy would be "unfair, inefficient and opaque"(Carothers, 1998, p.97).

### **3.4 Integrity**

Consistent with the principles of meritocracy, equality and the rule of law, the 'Singapore Model' champion for the importance of integrity where one does "the right thing at all times and in all circumstances, whether or not anyone is watching (Anderson, 2012)". As such, the 'Singapore Model' advocates for honesty and moral uprightness at all levels: political, economic and social.

While dishonesty might provide one with instant gratification (Anderson, 2012), it comes at the expense of others, violates the trust and breaks social contract. Corruption or the

"perversion of a person's integrity (Tan, 2007, p. 14)" is the "abuse of entrusted power for private gains (Transparency International, 2015)". Corruption violates the principles of integrity, meritocracy and the equality of opportunity. If it goes unpunished, rule of law would be violated. Therefore, the 'Singapore Model' places paramount importance in fighting corruption.

### **3.5 Equality**

According to Merriam-Webster (2015) dictionary, equality is the "quality or state of being equal". Equality (The University of Edinburgh, 2015) is "ensuring individuals or groups of individuals are treated fairly and equally and no less favorably, specific to their needs, including areas of race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age".

The purpose of this paper intends to focus and define the equality under the explanation of the Singapore Model with the concepts of "equality before the law", "equality of opportunity" and "equality of race, religion and language" that would be covered under the principles of Rule of law, Meritocracy and Multiracialism respectively.

All in all, the thesis proposition states that China could become a large Singapore if and only if the Chinese Communist Party have similar conditions to that of Singapore in the 1950s/1960s and hence the potential to embrace the fundamentals of multiracialism, meritocracy, equality, integrity and the rule of law.

## **4 Research Methodology**

In this section, the research methodology used to define the research question would be explained in detail.

The research question of whether "Can China be a Large Singapore?" would be analyzed in three parts. This thesis would first explain the fundamentals and the mechanics of the 'Singapore Model'. With the 'Singapore Model' fully grasped, a comparative study into the conditions that allowed Singapore to adapt the model with that of China's conditions today would be carried out. A roadmap to adopt the model will also be proposed.

### **4.1 Qualitative Historical Research**

To dissect the 'Singapore Model', a qualitative historical research into Singapore's modernization history and PAP's rule since 1959 is necessary. Qualitative historical research (Firouzkouhi & Zargham-Boroujeni, 2015) incorporated the steps: "Identifying the area of interest, raising questions, formulating a title, reviewing the literature, data gathering and analysis, interpreting data, and writing the narrative" (p. 161). Primary resources include People Action Party (PAP)'s party resources, Singapore Government website archives, and autobiography of Singapore's founding Prime Minister Mr. Lee Kuan Yew. Secondary resources contain newspaper articles, videos, books, opinion editorials and critiques of the 'Singapore Model'.

### **4.2 Comparative Analysis**

With a better understanding of the 'Singapore Model' and the necessary conditions, the research would then proceed to do a comparative analysis with that of China today.

Through identifying the gaps between the Chinese reality and the 'Singapore Model', this research would also provide a roadmap for adapting the 'Singapore Model'. Primary sources comprise the Chinese Communist Party statements and party documents. Secondary resources consist of newspaper articles, videos, books, opinion editorials and critiques on China and its rise.

## **5 Analysis**

This section would be separated into three subsections: 1) The Singapore Model, 2) Conditions Analysis: Singapore's Past, China's Future? 3) How can China be a large Singapore? The 3 sections would be analyzed based on the ideals of Meritocracy, Multiracialism, Equality, Rule of Law and Integrity.

### **5.1 The Singapore Model**

On 9 August 1965, only after a year into merger, Singapore separated from Malaysia due to deep political and economic differences (National Library Board Singapore, 2010). Fresh off fending the challenges of colonialism and communism, then Prime Minister Mr. Lee Kuan Yew was left with an unenviable task of leading a small but yet multi-language, multiracial, multi-religious country with no hinterland or natural resources.

Faced with such unique challenges, Singapore needed a unique governance model to overcome the divisive factors of its diverse population, raise living standards and reduce unemployment. Drawing from his education in law at Cambridge and the experience of the Japanese Occupation, Mr. Lee and his team of pioneers experimented and developed a governance model known as the 'Singapore Model'. This model is based on multiracialism, equality, meritocracy, integrity and the rule of law.

#### **5.1.1 Multiracialism**

##### **5.1.1.1 Singapore 1950s/1960s**

Singapore, in the 1950s and early 1960s was a multiracial (71% Chinese, 19% Malay, 8% Indian, 2% Others), multi-religious state plagued by labor strikes, student unrest and racial riots.

Year	Incident	Reason	Casualties
1950	Maria Hertogh Riot (National Library Board Singapore, 2014)	In response to a court ruling that a child raised by Muslims should be returned to her Catholic biological parents	18 killed, 173 Injured
1955	Hock Lee Bus Riot (Ho, 2014)	In response to the sacking of 229 bus drivers who used militant methods to obtain increased wages and improved working conditions	4 killed, 31 Injured
1956	Chinese Middle School Riots (National Library Board Singapore, 2014)	In response to Lim Hock Yew Administration arrest and ban of pro-communist personnel and organizations	13 killed, >100 injured
1964	Communal riots of 1964 (Han, 2014).	First series of riots started during a muslim procession. Second series of riots started when a Malay trishaw rider was killed	36 killed, 560 injured

Table 1: Social Unrest and Riots in Singapore in the 1960s

Of the social instability in the 1950s and 1960s, the communal riots in 1964 had huge ramifications on Singapore's political history. Political tensions between the PAP in Singapore and Alliance Party government in Malaysia led by the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) were high. Malay activists within UMNO launched a campaign that used Malay newspapers and provocative speeches to accuse Mr. Lee Kuan Yew and the PAP of oppressing local Malays and depriving them of the special rights their counterparts in Malaysia had to seek solidarity and political support with the Malays in Singapore. Such racial politics created an air of distrust among the Chinese and the Malays in Singapore. Because racial tensions, distrusts and emotions were high, a minor

clash between the races rapidly degraded into the series of racial riots in 1964. Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew then alleged that UMNO sparked the racial riots (Lee, 1998) while Malaysia Deputy Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak pushed the blame to Indonesian and Communist provocateurs (Lepawsky, 2010).

Having experienced the deadly racial riots in the 1960s, then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew saw the urgent need to govern Singapore's diverse population free from racial discrimination. However, the noble dream of Mr. Lee's aspiration was much easier said than done. Singapore needed a system whereby people were judged based on their own merits and not by races; a system where people of all races had level playing ground that was not only attractive for Singapore, but also to businesses locally and internationally. As such, it was no surprise that Mr. Lee turned to the ideals of multiracialism, meritocracy, equality and the rule of law as one of the cardinal principles of the 'Singapore Model'.

#### 5.1.1.2 Singapore Today

Singapore today, is a far cry from the Singapore in the 1950s and 1960s. Today, Singapore is a harmonious multiracial and multi-religious society (Lee, 2014). With the different ethnic and religious groups respecting each other's cultures and religions, Singapore has not seen the repeat of major racial conflicts since the 1964 racial riots. This is largely due to the government's intervention and active integration of the different ethnical and religious groups in society. Two of the most important policies that have contributed to racial harmony today are the Bilingualism policy and the Ethnic Integration Policy for public housing estates.

Bilingualism (Tham, 2015) is one of the cornerstones of Singapore's racial integration



efforts. In the early days of nation building, different groups of Singaporeans spoke different languages. To create a "common space" and "unite all races", English was decided as the working language. However, to preserve Singapore's "cultural ballast", each ethnic group had to study its own mother tongue. While some Singaporean find hard to adjust to this policy and feel aggrieved till this day, the policy undoubtedly widens the Singaporean's common space, lays foundations for harmonious communication between races and contributes greatly to Singaporean's ease of interaction with the world at large (Channel NewsAsia, 2015).

Through the Ethnic Integration Policy (Housing & Development Board, 2015) for public housing estates (government-housing program covered 85% of the population), the government mandated that every block of public housing needs to have a certain proportion of racial composition. The main idea of such a policy is not only to prevent geographical segregation of races and the formation of ghettos; it also provides the opportunity for the different ethnic groups and religions to interact with each other. Through such active integration and interaction, Singaporeans of different races are able to understand cultural differences and build trust among the different ethnic and religious groups.

## 5.1.2 Meritocracy

### 5.1.2.1 Singapore 1950s/1960s

Singapore, in the 1950s and 1960s, was a migrant society with a majority of Chinese migrants. Inculcated with the Confucian values of self-reliance (Lee, 1998), the Singapore society then, had elements of Meritocracy. In its early days, scholarships (Lee, 1998) and employment were largely based on merit. There was an emphasis on getting a good education to get into the civil service with the best jobs then (Sung, 2006).

However, these elements of meritocracy were largely superseded by the white supremacy (Lee, 1998) from the British colonial rule and the problems of corruption.

#### 5.1.2.2 Singapore Today

As the saying goes, "no one owes us a living". "Each person has his own porcelain rice bowl" and have work for his own living (Lee, 1984). Singapore is not and does not aspire to become a welfare state. As such, "Singapore Model" is modeled to strike the fine balance between overdependence and motivation, where self-reliance is emphasized while safety nets are constructed for those who are unable to fend for themselves.

Singapore today is a meritocratic society regulated by both formal and substantive equality of opportunity. In Singapore, rewards and remuneration to be gained by individuals are proportional to their individual efforts. At all levels of society, be it in school, at work or in the civil society, everyone in Singapore has the same opportunity to succeed based on his or her merits. In order to enhance the formal equality of opportunity, the Singaporean Governments have also allocated extra efforts in preventing/weeding out corruption and nepotism to enhance efficiency and at the same time, to provide a fair environment for competition.

However, having only formal equality of opportunity where superior positions are judged fairly based on merits is insufficient. There needs to be substantive equality of opportunity (Arneson, 2015) where everyone has a genuine opportunity to become qualified. To accommodate the need, the Singapore governments place immense emphasis in providing quality education, affordable health services and housing for everyone. In Singapore, the biggest redistribution of capital gains is done through housing policies. In general, Singaporeans are able to purchase public housing without

the incurrence of land-cost. In spite of the government provision of quality education, affordable health services and public housing, Singaporeans are expected to be self-reliant.

At the political level, political meritocracy is also emphasized. With no natural resources and only a small population to rely upon, the 'Singapore Model' upholds the view that the key towards good governance lies in having good and proactive leadership in the governments. This is because democratic elections, separation of powers and systems that make bureaucracies accountable to legislature might not be necessarily enough for good governance. Quality-governing institutions and good political leadership are paramount for good governance. Not only must these leaders ensure that national interests are being protected, they have to maintain high standards to gain and sustain public trust of the people.

Tasked with colossal responsibility of identifying and overseeing good leaders, Singapore's Public Service Commission (PSC) was established on 1 January 1951 (Public Service Commission Singapore, 2014) as an independent organ of the state. With the guiding principles of integrity, impartiality and meritocracy, PSC oversees the recruitment, promotion and terms of service for Singapore's civil servants. Recruiting excellent individuals with a variety of expertise from different walks of life, these civil servants are trained to avoid "groupthink" and to solve the country's unique needs and challenges. Continuing the spirit of meritocracy, the emerging diversity in public servants is not compromised at the cost of ability as the affirmative action and positive discrimination are avoided.

### 5.1.3 Rule of Law

#### 5.1.3.1 Singapore 1950s/1960s

With the fatal racial riots and rising tendencies of strikes, Singapore needed "Law and Order". Having seen how severe punishment limited crimes during the Japanese Occupation (Lee, 1998), Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew views on "law and order" and the rule of law was as such:

In a settled and established society, law appears to be a precursor of order... But the hard realities of keeping the peace between person and person and between authority and the individual, can be more accurately described if the phrase was inverted to "order and law," for without order, the operation of law is impossible. Order having established, and the rules having become enforceable in a settled society, only then is it possible to work out human relationships between subject and subject, and subject and the state in accordance with predetermined rules of law. And when a state of increasing disorder and defiance of authority cannot be checked by the rules then existing... drastic rules have to be forged to maintain order so that the law can continue to govern human relations. The alternative is to surrender order for chaos and anarchy. (Lee, 2013, p.122)

To restore order in Singapore, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew implemented "rule by law" with drastic rules. Three prominent cases that occurred were Operation Coldstore, Chia Thye Poh's arrest and the "Marxist Conspiracy". Under the Preservation of Public Security Ordinance, Operation Coldstore (National Library Board Singapore, 2011) took place on 2 February 1963. Under the instructions of the Special Branch, at least 107 persons were arrested for communist 'subversive activities' that dealt a severe blow to the

communist network in Singapore then. In 1966, Chia Thye Poh (Chua, 2013) was arrested and detained under the Internal Security Act, and was not charged or tried till his conditional release in 1989 for his involvement in violent subversive activities which he had later denied. In 1987, Ministry of Home Affairs detained 16 people under the International Security Act for their involvement in a "Marxist Conspiracy" for subversive activities (Kaur, 2009). Among all the other arrests, the Amnesty International (1976) has deemed Operation Coldstore, Chia Thye Poh's arrest and the Marxist Conspiracy as arbitrary arrests with the Singapore Governments "curtailing the application of the rule of law" (p. 4).

Nonetheless, such tactics of "Rule by Law" restored order in the Singapore. With public safety and political predictability (Khanna, 2015) from "Order", Mr. Lee then made the transition towards the Rule of Law.

#### 5.1.3.2 Singapore Today

Today, Singapore is a country that abides by the "Rule of Law" as enshrined in its parliamentary constitution. Ranked 10<sup>th</sup> position in terms of adherence with the Rule of law in practice in an independent ranking done by the World Justice Project (2014), Singapore is placed higher than the advanced democracies such as United Kingdom (Ranked 13th) and United States (Ranked 19th).

The Founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew emphasized that "Freedom can only exist in an ordered state and not in a natural state of contention and anarchy (Zakaria, 1994). " Singapore's Rule of Law is one that subscribes to positive liberty as opposed to negative liberty. Positive liberty (Carter, 2012) refers to the "possibility of acting — or the fact of

acting — in such a way as to take control of one's life and realize one's fundamental purposes" while negative liberty is "the absence of obstacles, barriers or constraints."

However, this definition of "Positive Liberty" carries the danger of authoritarianism as the paradox of positive liberty suggests. To Singapore, liberty means that the individual's interests could only be realized when societal interests are first protected. Therefore, on grounds of security, public order, morality, friendly relations with the neighbors, individual's rights to freedom of speech and expression, peaceful assembly without arms and association may be restricted as stipulated in Article 14 of Singapore's constitution (Singapore Statutes Online, 2015).

While it is debatable to whether the Singaporean Constitution has overreached itself, there is no exception to equality before the law. To ensure that "every person is subject to the same laws and no one (however rich or powerful) is above the law (Fair Trials International, 2015)", Singapore's parliamentary structure creates a system of check and balances to prevent the abuse of power in the governments while its anti-corruption efforts act as a fail-safe valve in its determination to ensure that everyone is equal before the law.

When Singapore gained independence on 9 August 1965, she inherited the Westminster system of unicameral parliamentary democracy from its British colonial masters (Lee, 1998). Through the 5-yearly General Elections and 6-yearly Presidential Elections, eligible citizens elect the legislature (Member of Parliaments) and the President respectively. The leader of the political party that secured the majority of the seats in the Parliament, from the pool of the elected legislature, would be the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister then selects his Ministers from the elected MPs to form the Cabinet.

Additionally, the President, on the advice of the Cabinet appoints the Judiciary. Under such system, the Prime Minister is the head of the Parliament with executive powers while the largely ceremonial President becomes the head of state that wielded custodial powers (Lee, 2011).

Within the Singapore's Parliament, power is separated into 3 branches (Ministry of Law Singapore, 2015) - the Legislature (President and Member of Parliaments) enacts legislations; the Executive (President, Cabinet and Attorney General) drafts and implements the law; and the Judiciary (Supreme Court and State Courts) enforce the law. The separation of powers is to create a system of check and balances to prevent abuse of powers by other branches.

Firstly, the democratically elected legislature and executive are responsible to the voters. If the legislature and executive fail to discharge their duty in the interests of Singaporeans, the legislature and executive would have to face the voters in the next election.

Secondly, the Legislature and the Cabinet monitor each other. The Cabinet, who are also members of the legislature, could serve as long as it retains the confidence of the legislature. Therefore, at any time, the legislative majority could pressure the cabinet to resign; either by a negative vote on the cabinet's major legislation or by a majority vote of "no confidence". On the contrary, the cabinet could dissolve the legislature and call for new elections. The Prime Minister, who is also a member of the legislature and the chief executive, is no exception to this procedure. The Prime Minister could be removed too by a "no confidence" vote or a vote of disapproval on his/her major initiative.

Lastly but not the least, the Judiciary checks and balances both the legislative and executive branches. As stipulated in Article 4 of Singapore Constitution (Singapore Statutes Online, 2015), the Judiciary has the power to conduct judicial reviews to void unconstitutional executive decisions or laws and to ensure the integrity of the constitution.

In order for the Judiciary to discharge their duty in good faith, it is necessary and critical for the judiciary to be independent from the other branches. Enshrined in the Constitution, Judicial independence (Singapore Statutes Online, 2015) has a pivotal role in maintaining equality before law in Singapore. To safeguard judicial independence, the Singapore Constitution states that:

1) Removal of judges may only be effected upon recommendations raised by the tribunal of his/her peers for reasons such as misbehavior or incapability. Strictly speaking, the politicians have no rights in effecting the removal.

2) Judges in Singapore have the security of tenure up to the age of 65 years old. With the permanent tenure, they are more likely to rule in accordance with the law. As opposed to periodic renewal of judicial appointments, the executive or legislative may exact inappropriate influences to yield favorable rulings from the judiciary (Schill, 2010).

3) Remuneration of the judges in Singapore is constitutionally protected. During the tenure, his or her remuneration may not be reduced. Besides this, the remuneration given to the judges is calculated in accordance to the standard of living which matches to their social status in society. Appropriate remuneration would then prevent judicial corruption as poorly paid judges have a higher tendency to succumb to bribes.



4) In Singapore, the judicial office enjoys immunity from civil suits. Immunity from civil suits for any acts done in the course of discharging his judicial duties promotes the independency of judges. This prevents the other branches of the governments from using civil suits or the threat of civil suits to influence the judges' decisions.

5) There are also measures to protect the judiciary. The conduct of a Supreme Court judge cannot be discussed in Parliament unless a quarter of the elected members of parliament agree to it. In addition, the law provides the courts with the authority to punish violators for contempt of court.

6) To minimize biases, judges are not able to act when there is a conflict of interest. In the eyes of the common law, judges can be disqualified from the case if he or she is biased against or for any party. Such a practice is carried out so as to maintain public confidence in the judiciary.

With such measures in place, judicial independence becomes the backbone of Singapore's parliamentary system with system of checks and balances.

Over the years, the leaders of People Action Party have filed defamation suits against opposition members and foreign media in attempt to defend their reputations and clear their names of wrongful accusations. For PAP, their stance has been that "once you say you can speak untruths and go unpunished, you're going to have many untruths and they are referred to repeatedly until, like Goebbels said, it begins to be believed (Han & Lee, 2011, p.86-87)". But such tactics have not gone down well with the international media and opposition members as they allege the ruling party's manipulation of courts to silence critics and political opponents and to stifle freedom of speech. While it might be

convenient for critics and opposition to do cherry picking, what should be noted is that PAP too is under the same set of legal standards and courts. In 1981, an unprecedented libel suit took place as Mr Chiam See Tong (Siew, 2009) sued the then Foreign Minister S. Dhanabalan for "undermining his professional ability and competence at an election rally" and subsequently received a public apology and out-of-court damages from the PAP leader. Corruption cases that involved politicians from the People Action Party - Former Minister for National Development Tan Kia Gan, then Minister of State for Environment Wee Toon Boon and then Minister for National Development Teh Cheang Wan - were dealt fairly and handed guilty convictions. As such, with the measures to ensure judicial independence and equality before the law, Singapore's Rule of Law is not just rhetoric; ruling party politicians, like all other citizens, are equal before the law.

#### 5.1.4 Integrity

##### 5.1.4.1 Singapore 1950s/1960s

When Lee Kuan Yew assumed power in the late 1950s, Singapore was plagued by widespread corruption at all levels of society like China is experiencing today. The previous administration, under Lim Yew Hock, from the year 1956 till 1959, was "corrupt from head to toe". "Bribes and kickbacks were part of the way of life" for Singaporeans as "people had to grease palms to obtain licenses, permits, immigration papers, public housing and coveted places in school (Quah, 2011, p. 175)". Corruption then was a low risk high reward activity as corrupt officials were seldom caught and even if they were, they were not severely punished (Quah, 2001).

Rampant corruption in Singapore was aided by the fact that corruption was not a sizeable offence and the powers of the anti-corruption bureau were inadequate (Quah, 2001).

Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew was convicted to fight corruption because of Confucian teachings of integrity, the need to put the country in order, protect his government's legitimacy and to spur economic growth (Soh, 2010). One of the very important teachings of Confucianism is Xiushen Qijia Zhiguo Pingtianxia (修身齐家治国平天下). The United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon explained the concept that "To put the world in order, you must first put your country in order; then to put the country in order, you must have a very harmonious family; then to put your family harmoniously in order, we must cultivate our personal life; and to cultivate our personal life, we must first set our hearts right (Ban, 2014)." Therefore, then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew opined that eradicating corruption and upholding integrity are the precursors to restore order.

With his political will and determination, the PAP governments enacted the Prevention of Corruption Act (POCA) in 1960 (Singapore Statutes Online, 2015) to empower the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) to fight against corruption; protect the integrity of both the public service and the private sector; bring corruption offenders to the book; and carry out corruption prevention efforts. With the increase in salaries of civil servants and the strengthening of legislation on corruption, Corruption was made a high-risk low-return affair (Quah, 2001). With the director of the bureau directly reporting to then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, he oversaw the sharp drop in corruption cases. Since then, Singapore's anti-corruption stance has become the backbone of Singapore's Rule of Law and Meritocratic ideals.

#### 5.1.4.2 Singapore Today

Today, Singapore is one of the "cleanest" countries in the world with Transparency International ranking Singapore at 7<sup>th</sup> position in its Corruption Perception Index (Transparency International, 2014).

Singapore Government's pledge towards incorruptibility is not just rhetoric as seen in the guilty convictions of senior government officials and ruling party members. In November 1986, Minister for National Development Mr. Teh Cheang Wan was investigated for corruption by CPIB (Lee, 1998). Due to his guilty consciousness, he took his own life. More recently in 2012, former Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) Chief Peter Lim was investigated and convicted of corruption for obtaining sexual gratification in return for tenders called by SCDF (Tham & Lim 2013).

Other than the CPIB efforts to curb corruption, another hallmark of Singapore's anti-corruption stance is the remuneration of public officers. In Singapore, ministerial earnings are benchmarked to the median income of the top 1000 earners (Shamim, 2015). This system of remunerating public officers with the salaries comparable to the private sector is said to prevent corruption, attract and retain talents. The logic behind this argument exudes the fact that insufficient remuneration would only increase the tendency to rely on money obtained through corrupted means and/or lose talents to the private sector.

In fact, the controversial issue of ministerial pay has been a flash point in recent years. Singaporeans have voiced their displeasures over the widening income gap and the appropriateness of such high remunerations. However, while one can doubt its appropriateness, Singapore's success in curbing corruption is undeniable.

On the whole, the parliamentary system and the anti-corruption efforts safeguard the rule of law and the equality before the law. Since nobody is above the law, people are given a fair and competitive environment to succeed. Furthermore, Singapore's Rule of Law has also attracted businesses and prop the economy because she remains "reliable and

credible to investors (Calestous, 2013)."

### 5.1.5 Political Leadership and Political Will

The ability for Singapore to adopt such values and principles was not by accident or by chance, but the political leadership and political will of the Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and the People's Action Party since assuming power in 1959. Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and the People's Action Party were capable because they had the political capital and the political will to take on reforms in the best interest of the nation.

Year	Leader of Ruling Party	Popular Vote	Pct (%) of valid votes	Seats contested	Seats won	Control of Parliament
1959	Lee Kuan Yew	281,891	54.1%	51	43	84.3
1963	Lee Kuan Yew	272,924	46.9%	51	37	72.5
1968	Lee Kuan Yew	65,812	86.7	58	58	100.0
1972	Lee Kuan Yew	524,892	70.4	65	65	100.0
1976	Lee Kuan Yew	590,169	74.1	69	69	100.0
1980	Lee Kuan Yew	494,268	77.7	75	75	100.0
1984	Lee Kuan Yew	568,310	64.8	79	77	97.5
1988	Lee Kuan Yew	848,029	63.2	81	80	98.8
1991	Goh Chok Tong	477,760	61.0	81	77	95.1
1997	Goh Chok Tong	465,751	65.0	83	81	97.6
2001	Goh Chok Tong	470,765	75.3%	84	82	97.6
2006	Lee Hsien Loong	748,130	66.6%	84	82	97.6
2011	Lee Hsien Loong	1,212,154	60.1%	87	81	93.1

Table 2: General Elections in Singapore since 1959 (Elections Department Singapore, 2014)

As depicted in Table 2 (General Elections in Singapore since 1959), Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and People's Action Party's supermajority in the parliament meant that they have the political capital. On top of having political capital, they also have the political will to make good use of the political capital to enact reforms that were not popular, but beneficial in the long term. As Mr Lee Kuan Yew said, "If you want to be popular all the time, you will misgovern (Allison, Blackwill & Wyne, 2013, p.117)". Unpopular decisions that are made for the long term welfare include the bilingualism policy, ethnic integration policy, anti-corruption efforts, economic reforms (Teo, 2015) and etc. which later become essential policies towards the 'Singapore Model'.

## **5.2 Conditions Analysis: Singapore's Past, China's Future?**

While what Singapore is today might seem as perfection to China, Singapore in the 1950s and 1960s was actually a "country that wasn't meant to be (Tharman, 2015)". It was said that Singapore did not have the conditions necessary to survive, let alone succeed. However, with the conditions (Refer to Table 3: Conditions conducive for 'Singapore Model') in the 1950s and 1960s, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew "successfully married Confucian values with Western concepts such as openness, transparency and the rule of law (Siow, 2015) " with the Singapore Model of Meritocracy, Rule of Law, Integrity, Multiracialism and Equality.

'Singapore Model'	Conditions conducive for 'Singapore Model'	
	Objective	Circumstances
Multiracialism	1. Racial Harmony	1. Ethnic Diversity 2. Ethnic Conflicts - due to racial discrimination
Meritocracy & Equality (of opportunity)	1. Favorable business climate 2. Fair opportunity to succeed 3. Best man for the job (at all levels) 4. Self-Reliance	1. History of Meritocratic Practice 2. Confucianism (Self-Reliance)
Rule of Law & Equality (before the Law)	1. Maintain Order 2. Avoiding Arbitrary Rule 3. Predictable business climate	1. Ethnic/Social conflict 2. Legal Background (for ruling elite)
Integrity	1. Improve party legitimacy 2. Favorable business climate 3. Fair opportunity to succeed	1. Rampant Corruption 2. Eroding legitimacy 2. Confucianism (Moral Leadership)
To effect 'Singapore Model'		1. One Party State 2. Centralized Bureaucracy 3. Political Capital 4. Political Will

Table 3: Conditions conducive for 'Singapore Model'

Comparing the socioeconomic and political conditions (Table 4), it seems that China (2014) possesses the similar conditions to that Singapore had in the 1950s /1960s.

		Singapore 1960s	China 2014	Singapore 2014
Geographic Factors (Size)	Population	1,600,000*	1,355,692,576	5,500,000
	Land Area (km2)	581.5*	9,388,211	718.3
	Population Density	2751.50	148	7656.97
	Natural Resources	0	12%	0
	International Influence	Negligible	Huge	Moderate
	Domestic Market	Negligible	Huge	Negligible
Political Factors	Political Capital	High	High	High
	Political Will	High	Unknown	High
	Confucian Values	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Secular Government	Yes	Yes	Yes
	One Party State	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Legal System	Rule by Law	Rule by Law	Rule of Law
	Meritocratic Practices	Somewhat	Somewhat	High
Centralized Bureaucracy	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Corruption	High	High	Low	
Economic Factors	GDP per capita	US\$1240*	US6807.4****	US\$71318****
	Unemployment	13.5%*	4.6%****	2%
	GINI coefficient	0.498***	0.55	0.412****
	Growth Rate	5.2%	7.4%	2.9%
Social Factors	Social Conflict	Yes	Yes	No
	Racial Conflict	Yes	Yes	No
	Number of Ethnic groups	4	56	4
	Demographics	71% Chinese 19% Malay 8% Indian 2% Others **	91.6% Han Chinese 8.4% Minorities	74.2% Chinese 13.3% Malay 9.2% Indian 3.3% Others

Table 4: Social, Economic, Political and Geographical Conditions for Singapore (1960s and 2014) and China (2014)

\*1959

\*\*1965,

\*\*\* 1966,

\*\*\*\* 2013

Sources: Singapore 1960s Population from Straits Times (2015), Singapore 1960s



Landarea from Quah (2007) Singapore 1960s Confucian Values from Zakara (1994), Singapore 190s Corruption from Quah (2007), Singapore 1960s GDP per Capita from Straits Times (2015), Singapore 1960s Unemployment from Straits Times (2015), Singapore 1960s Growth Rate from Straits Times (2015), China 2014 Population from Central Intelligence Agency (2015) China Landsize from Knoema (2015), China 2014 Natural Resources from Encyclopedia Britannica (2015), China 2014 Confucian Value from Xi Jinping (2014), China 2014 Corruption Perception Index (2014), China 2014 Unemployment rate from World Bank (2014), China 2014 Gini Coefficient from (Yu and Xiang, 2014), China 2014 Growth Rate from Magnier et. al (2015), China 2014 Demographics from Central Intelligence Agency (2015), Singapore 2014 Population from Straits Times (2015), Singapore 2014 Land Area from Straits Times (2015), Singapore 2014 Confucian from Chowdhury and Islam (1993), Singapore 2014 Rule of Law from World Justice Project (2014), Singapore 2014 Corruption from Transparency International (2014), Singapore 2014 GDP Per Capita from Straits Times (2015), Singapore 2014 Gini Coefficient from Singapore Department of Statistics (2014). Singapore 2014 Growth Rate from Straits Times (2015), Singapore 2014 Demographics from Mahubani (2015)

Politically, both countries belong to one-party ruling states and maintain a Confucian Value System with meritocratic elements in the society and a centralized bureaucracy that ruled by law. Economically, both are third world developing countries with comparable GDP per capita, growth rates and GINI coefficient (Singapore unemployment rate was higher) that were plagued by rampant corruption. Socially, they have a Chinese majority population of multi-ethnic and multi-religious society that was plagued by social and racial conflicts. However, size is the significant difference between the two countries, then and today.

In the following subsections, the conditions needed for multiracialism, rule of law, integrity, meritocracy and equality will be analyzed to understand how these conditions allowed Singapore in the 1950s/1960s to become what Singapore is today, and to compare whether China do have similar, or even better conditions to adopt the ‘Singapore Model’.

### 5.2.1 Comparing Conditions for Multiracialism

Singapore's adherence to multiracialism as one of its cardinal principles was deemed essential as she wanted to restore racial harmony in its ethnically and religiously diverse society punctuated by deadly ethnic conflicts due to racial discrimination.

Both Singapore and China encountered the same problem of ethnic conflicts arising from its multi-ethnic, multi-religious (Hackett & Grim, 2012) and multi-language population. China's 1.37 billion people (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2015), is made up 56 different ethnic groups with the Han Chinese majority of 91.51% and 55 Ethnic minority groups making up the remaining 8.49% of the Chinese population. Recent statistics also shows that a trend of minority population increases (Yun, 2013) vis-à-vis the Han Chinese.

Similar to Singapore's experiences of the 1950 Maria Hertogh Riots and the 1964 Racial Riots that claimed lives, China too had experienced intense inter-ethnic communal violence over the past few years. From the Lhasa riot in 2008, the Uighur Separatist violence since 2009 and multiple knife attacks at railway stations in Kunming, Urumqi, Guangzhou and the flaming car attack in Tiananmen Square in 2014 (Tanner, 2014), there seems to be growing ethnic tensions between the state and minority ethnic groups. It was said that causes of these ethnic tensions in Xinjiang, Tibet and Mongol arised from

the following (Human Rights in China, 2007):

- 1) Exclusion from political involvement
- 2) Inequitable development
- 3) Loss of cultural identity

However, while ethnic tensions and violence in Xinjiang and Tibet had drawn international media attention and criticisms, it should not be generalized as widespread ethnic conflicts between the 56 ethnic groups and the state in China (Han, 2014).

Nonetheless, with ethnic violence having the potential to stir emotions, polarize the country and threaten the social fabric in both Singapore and China, the governments would have to deal with the perceived or actual ethnic and/or religious discrimination in the country. In the case of Singapore, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew viewed the need to adopt the principle of Multiracialism - that accorded "equal status to the cultures and ethnic identities of various races" - as the underlying solution to the ethnic conflicts in Singapore.

China, today too have similar conditions to adopt 'Singapore Model' of Multiracialism principle in the 1950s/1960s to restore harmony; the desire to restore harmony in its multi-ethnic, multi-religious society affected by racial violence due to ethnic discrimination. Therefore, for Xi's Administration, abiding by the principle of Multiracialism potentially nips the racial discrimination problem in the bud and restores racial harmony in its multi-ethnic, multi-religious combustible society.

### 5.2.2 Comparing Conditions for Meritocracy

With much of the migrant population Chinese (including Mr Lee Kuan Yew himself), it is not surprising that Confucianism, meritocracy and the thought of self-reliance were imported from China. However, as explained previously, Singapore in the 1950s and 1960s, despite the influence of Confucianism, were not exactly meritocratic due to the problems of corruption and white supremacy.

Drawing from the Confucius teachings of achieving a harmonious society "based on the educational system and work ethic when it comes to determining a person's position (Deodhar, 2012, p.233)", Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew then saw the importance of upholding the Meritocratic ideals so as to cultivate a self-reliant society, attract businesses, deploy the best man for the job, and provide everyone a fair chance to succeed, regardless of race, religion or social status.

Today China is similar to that of Singapore in the early 1950s and 1960s. Under the influence of Confucianism and a history of meritocratic practices (Elman, 1989), modern day China have elements of Meritocracy in the form of the National College Entrance Examination (gaokao 高考), the Civil Servant Exam (gongwuyuan kaoshi 公务员考试), political meritocracy and etc.

Every year, millions of Chinese students take the high-pressure national college entrance examination (Siegel, 2007) to jostle for places in prestigious colleges. Similarly, about a million of Chinese people take on the comparatively open, transparent and highly competitive Civil Servant Exam every year to secure a decent future (Xinhuanet, 2013) also known as a "Golden Rice Bowl" (jinfanwan 金饭碗) via working in the civil service.

Politically, the Chinese Governments also rely on a system to select political leaders based on merit. Dismissing democracy as the "only game in town", the Chinese Communist Party adopts a system of political meritocracy (Bell, 2012) to select and promote talented and virtuous political leaders to govern the country. To join the Chinese Communist Party, the applicants need to have the backing of the existing members and require to clearing the background checks and examinations. Successful applicants would then be put on a year of probation before further assessments and trainings are conducted to becoming a full member.

Promotions within the party ranks are also merit-based. Administering the "Nomenklatura" system of personal management, the Organization Department of the Communist Party of China appraises the party cadres based on professional merit, moral integrity, professional achievements and public acceptance (Shambaugh, 2008).

As articulated by the Vice President of China Mr. Li Yuanchao, the meritocratic promotion system (Bell, 2012) adopts different criteria for various levels of the governments. At the lower levels, emphasis is placed on close connection with the public; while at higher levels, selection is much more rigorous and the emphasis is placed on rationality. For instance, during the selection process of the secretary general of the Organization Department, the party cadres would nominate potential candidates. Through the nomination process for the secretary general post, 10 party members with the most votes are placed on a written examination. From the reviews of the written examination, five potential candidates are short-listed. Next, an oral examination with the ministers, vice-ministers and university professors is conducted to further narrow the list down to three candidates. Amongst the three candidates, the department of personnel would review the performances and virtues of the candidates before recommending two

candidates for the final phase. A committee of 12 ministers is formed to cast their selection votes, with at least 8 votes is needed to finalize the candidate for the post. If there are insufficient required votes, then the ministers would discuss further until a two-third-majority decision is reached. In order to ensure that the process is fair and transparent, party cadres would supervise and inspect the entire process.

While China has the elements of meritocracy and equality of opportunity, like Singapore in the 1960s, she is not exactly meritocratic. This is due to the fact that there is an absence of fair opportunity for everyone to succeed and the lack of social mobility (Dollar, 2013) which could be attributed to the following factors:

#### 1) Household Registration System (Hukou 户口)

Under the current system, the rural-urban classification stacks the odds against the rural population of China. While the rural Chinese could migrate to urban cities, they do not have access to the urban social welfare system (Afrindi, Li & Ren, 2015) and social benefits such as healthcare, education, pensions and etc. The Chinese migrant workers are effectively classified as second-class citizens (Wilson Quarterly, 2012) in urban cities, as they would have to pay additional fees for basic services that should have been covered by the social benefits. The additional costs sharply constrain the opportunities of these migrant workers.

#### 2) Education Disparity

In 1986, the "Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China" dictates a nine-year compulsory education free for everyone (Yongli & Hong, 2008). In addition, students from the rural areas would have their miscellaneous fees exempted in the nine-year compulsory education while students from the poor families receive free textbooks

and subsidies. Despite engaging such measures to level the playing ground, inequality in education is still significant.

As education is locally funded, widespread income inequality between urban-rural and coastal-inland implies that resources allocation for education is much lesser for rural and/or inland cities. This also translates into a much lower quality of education which in turn, poses a significant disadvantage over the rural students when competing with the urban students in national exams.

### 3) Corruption

The problem of corruption in China is well known. In the 2014 Corruption Perceptions Index by Transparency International (Transparency International, 2015), China is ranked 100th out of 175 countries surveyed with a score of 36/100 (0: Highly Corrupt, 100: Very Clean). Corruption violates the "fair equality of opportunity" as elite families are able to use their status, influences and incomes to secure an unfair advantage for themselves or their children (Jong-Sung, 2007).

### 4) Faction Politics

Politically, other than the problem of corruption, faction politics (Foster, 2012) play a huge role in the ruthless political culture between "Princelings" and "Tuanpai." As Minxin Pei noted, "If you have a patron who can get you into the queue for jobs when you're young, ahead of other people, you are poised for greatness (Foster, 2012)." With such a culture of factionalism, it is not unthinkable that both factions will try to promote their faction members at the expense of meritocracy. In addition, corruption within the party has thrown the meritocratic nature of the Chinese system into doubt. One such event happened recently was the high profile Chinese government-related corruption case containing Zhou Yongkang, the ninth-ranking member of the ruling Politburo, for alleged

crimes that involved bribery and general abuse of power.

China today too has similar conditions as Singapore which led her to adopt the principle of Meritocracy in the 1950s/1960s to achieve harmony and social stability. For societies (like Singapore and China) accustomed to meritocratic practices, reinforcing the ideals of Meritocracy seem logical, where "societal advancements are based on individuals' ability and efforts (Arneson, 2015)"; cultivating a "self-reliant society" that provides its people with a fair opportunity to succeed, regardless of race, religion or social status; attracting businesses and improving the efficiency of its public and business sectors.

### 5.2.3 Comparing Conditions for Rule of Law

While Singapore Today is clearly a country run with the "Rule of Law" based on an independent ranking done by World Justice Project (2014), Singapore in its early days was a country "Ruled by law". For a country troubled by ethnic violence, Singapore needed a relatively fair mechanism that minimized the arbitrary rule so as to maintain order and to provide a predictable business environment for attracting investors. Drawing from his undergraduate education in law at the University of Cambridge, then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew incorporated the law. In the earlier days, Singapore adopted the "Rule by Law" to restore law and order before making the transition to the "Rule of Law".

China today, has already taken huge strides towards the "Rule by Law". Since 2012, the main political rhetoric coming out of the Chinese Communist Party has been "Fazhi 法治". The term "Fazhi 法治", as translated by Chinese Communist Party's Mouthpiece Xinhua refers to the "Rule of law". In reality, "Rule of Law" appears to be more like a goal but rather, the "Rule by Law" is in practice (Lu, 2015).



China today is much closer to the concept of "Rule by Law" due to the lack of judicial independence and constitutionalism to constrain "Power". Chinese Communist Party officials have even openly criticized (Qian, 2015) the concept of judicial independence on multiple occasions.

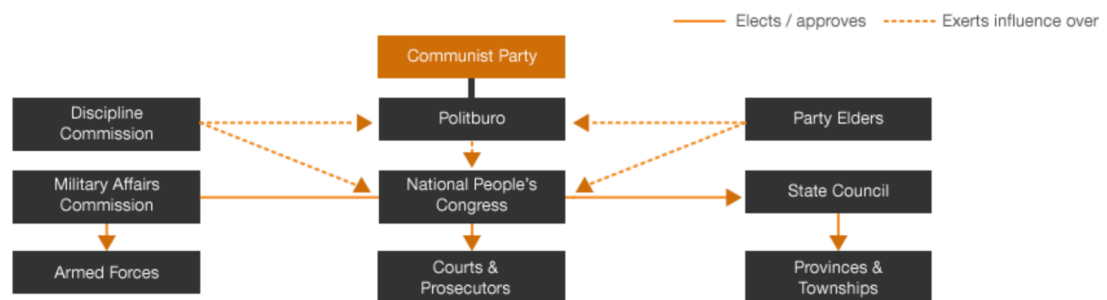


Figure 1: Flow Chart of Chinese Governance Structure (BBC, 2012)

As seen in the flow chart (Figure 1), Chinese governance is hierarchical where the Chinese Communist Party positions on top of the apex. With the courts and prosecutors under the control of the National People's Congress that are influenced by the Politburo, Party Elders and Discipline Commission, the judicial system is not independent from the external influence. Without separation of powers or judicial independence in the current governance climate in China, equality before the law is susceptible to violations. With the ongoing President Xi's anti-corruption campaign, some observers cited such violations and opined that the ongoing battle against graft is a manipulation of the law to remove political opponents (The Economist, 2013). As such, if the "Rule by Law" is closely followed in China, then the likely scenario would result in a set of law with double standards, one for those in power and the other for the rest.

Undisputedly, President Xi revival of legalism in China draws inspiration from Han Feizi, also referred as "China's Machiavelli (Mitchell, 2015)". The Legalism school of

thought postulated that "when those who uphold the law are strong, the state is strong; when they are weak, the state is weak (guowuchangqiang, wuchangruo. fengfazheqiang zeguoqiang, fengfazheruo zeguoruo 国无常强，无常弱。奉法者强则国强，奉法者弱则国弱 (Jia Yue, 2014))". Therefore, to pursue the "Chinese Dream" of a strong China, President Xi has sought to strengthen its legal system in recent years.

While President Xi obtained inspiration from the ancient Chinese philosophers, then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew relied on his legal education. In fact, both leaders were challenged with similar circumstances and objectives. Both countries needed a fair mechanism to maintain order amidst rising social and ethnic conflicts and require to creating a predictable and favorable business environment for its economic growth.

Similar to that of Singapore in the 1950s and 1960s, rising social unrest is threatening China's social fabric (Tanner, 2014). "Mass incidents" - a variety of protests ranging from sit-ins to strikes, marches and rallies, and even genuine riots are on an increase from 8,700 in 1993 to more than 120,000 by 2008 (Dan, 2010). "Social order" violations - disrupting public order, creating fights and disturbances, and obstructing state officials in performance of their duty upsurge from 3.2 million in 1995 to 13.9 million in 2012 (Tanner, 2014).

While the "Rule by Law" might restore Law and Order in the country, the "Rule of Law" and the "Rule by Law" do not share the same meaning (Chin, 2014); The "Rule of Law" implies fairness and predictable application of the law as "powers" are restrained and "rights" are protected whereas the "Rule by Law" is neither fair nor predictable because "Power" is not constrained and "Rights" are sacrificed (Li, 2011). Nonetheless, abiding by the "Rule by Law" first before the "Rule of Law", as per the Singapore story would

seem optimal for China today.

#### 5.2.4 Comparing Conditions for Integrity

At that time, then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew upholding Confucian views believed that integrity was the precursor to country in order and there was an urgent need to construct a favorable business climate to spur economic growth. As a result, he was committed to fight rampant corruption and make integrity one of the core pillars of the 'Singapore Model'.

China today is similar to Singapore then. Making references to the same Confucius thought of "cultivating the moral self, managing the family, governing the state and safeguarding peace under Heaven (Kaplan, 2015)" as "brilliant insights (Xi, 2014, p.200)", President Xi emphasized that fighting corruption is a matter of life-or-death (Xiang, 2015) for the Party and the nation during the fifth plenary session of the 18th Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI). This is because corruption is so pervasive in China (Ranked 100th out of 175 countries survey in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index) that it has been undermining government legitimacy, causing inefficiencies, restricting economic development, disrupting market order, widening income disparity and generating a source of social conflict (Zhou, 2010).

When President Xi Jinping assumed power in 2012, he vowed to fight the corrupt "way of life (Zhou, 2010)" for the Chinese and Chinese officials. Mr. Wang Qishan, ranked sixth in the seven-man Politburo Standing Committee, was appointed to head the party's Central Commission for Discipline and Inspection (CCDI) (Anderlini, 2014).

Since 1978, the Central Commission for Discipline and Inspection (CCDI), as an intra-

party agency (Yuen, 2014), was established to inspect and remove corrupt officials so as to restore party discipline and maintain the one-party rule. However, the setup of the Commission does little to alleviate the problem of corruption or is unable to act as an internal check and balance for the party. This is because of the flawed 'dual leadership system' that the Commission engages in the setup. Under this system, each local discipline inspection agency is under the leadership of both the upper-level Discipline Inspection Commission and the same-level local Party Committee. Yet, in practice, the local Party has had disproportionate influence over the upper-level Inspection Commission. Due to the fact that the local Party's control over budgetary and promotion matters for the local Inspection Commission, it is almost impossible for the local inspection commission to investigate the local Party Committee independently.

Knowing the inability of the Commission to fight against corruption, Mr. Wang was appointed to the setup so as to reinforce the supervision. The vertical line of supervision (Samson, 2014) is further strengthened with the adoption of a vertical promotion system (chuzhi timing 垂直提名), inspection tours, stationing (jinzhu 进驻) and special investigation teams (zhuanxiang xunchazu 专项巡查组) to investigate all levels of the government, Party units, Ministries and State-Owned Enterprise (SOEs).

Nicknamed the "Tigers and Flies" campaign (Wang, 2014), the Commission is successful in targeting both large (tigers) and small officials (flies). While the small officials are relatively easier to catch, the traditionally untouchable "tigers" are netted through a strategy of "encirclement". Similar to the game of Weiqi, the CCDI investigation teams first target the political cronies and business partners, before moving on to the family members and finally encroach the "tigers" itself. Such a strategy has seen the purge of Zhou Yongkang (a former member of the Politburo Standing Committee member), the

'Shanxi Gang', the 'Yunnan Fiefdom', the 'Jiangxi Gang', Xu Caihou and etc.

In other words, looking at the China today, it could be said that the conditions are similar to that of Singapore in the 1950s and 1960s: 1) rampant corruption, 2) Confucian view that integrity is the precursor to order in the country, 3) Need for a favorable business climate to spur economic growth and 4) the need to enhance party survival. Espousing the Confucian thought of moral integrity in the governance of China, President Xi Jinping embarked on the anti-corruption campaign to fight endemic corruption in China to uphold integrity, promote economic development and enhance party survival.

#### 5.2.5 Comparing Size: Singapore's Advantage, China's Disadvantage?

Many observers pointed that size - roughly a difference of sixteen thousand times - as the main barrier for China to adopt the Singapore Model. While it might be easy to pinpoint China's size and write off the 'Singapore Model', one should not view the size as one-dimensional. Size, in fact, is a double-edged sword that is both advantageous and disadvantageous when considering the adoption of the 'Singapore Model' into Mainland China.

##### 5.2.5.1 Size as China's Advantage

In the case of Singapore, size is her "permanent disadvantage (Tharman, 2015)". Singapore, in the 1960s was not considered a viable nation as she did not possess any natural resources, lack of international influence or a domestic market to maneuver with. Challenged with many eminent powers in the region without an army and depending on the imminent withdrawal of British Defense Spending in its early days, Singapore did not have any margin for error. As such, she worked hard and navigated herself with prudence (Zheng, 2015).

If Singapore's size is considered as her "permanent disadvantage", China's size would have been her permanent advantage. Firstly, China huge landmass and sea mass endowed her with a total twelve percent of the world's natural resources (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2015). Secondly, for a large country like China, size gifted her a huge domestic market of 1.4-billion population size to drive consumption, an enormous labor force, and high savings rate for more investments (Wildau, 2015). A large market also gives rise to increased productivity and is capable of reaping the benefits from the economies of scale. Thirdly, China enjoys great international influence due it the immense soft and hard powers that generated from its size. With rising military spending (BBC, 2015), its status as the largest trading nation (Hirschberg & Schumacher, 2013) and a major foreign aid donor, China is able to wield its influence for preferential treatment and support which small countries are unlikely to enjoy. As such, China is less likely to be subjected to foreign aggression and has a relatively larger or even comfortable margin for error. Fourthly, China by virtue of its large size meant that per capita costs of public goods are lower since there are more taxpayers to account for the expenses. Fifthly, China's size also allows her to internalize externalities that arise from a certain region of the country. Lastly, China has the potential to build redistributive schemes from richer to poorer individuals and regions, thereby achieving distributions of incomes after taxes that independent regions and small nations are unable to achieve.

Additionally, if we were to compare time periods for Singapore in the 1950s/1960s with China today, China is further advantaged by globalization in the 21st century. The importance of physical distance is diminished as effective distances are compensated by technology and transportation advancements (Deutsch & Isard, 1961). The social media, Internet and telecommunication services, real-time communication and information dissemination have been made possible and are ubiquitous while air travel and bullet trains have resulted in long-distance travel efficient and cost-effective.

#### 5.2.5.2 Size as China's Disadvantage

While China's size confers its advantages that Singapore is lacking, it is not an unmitigated blessing. With China's size, it also results in greater heterogeneity of preferences (Alesina, 2003, p. 304) as compared to Singapore with increased diversity of preferences, culture, language and “identity” of their population. If China were to adopt the 'Singapore Model', predictability and controllability would be decreased because of such heterogeneity of preferences.

Assuming that President Xi has the will to implement the 'Singapore Model', the diversity of preferences arising from China's size would also imply that it would potentially be more challenging to reach a consensus to adopt 'Singapore Model' within the Chinese leadership and the Chinese Communist Party that boasts more than eighty-six million party members. In other words, if reaching a consensus within the Party is challenging, then getting a consensus within its diverse population of 1.4 billion Chinese citizens is even more daunting.

Also, with China's size, certain policies would also need to be delegated from the central government in Beijing to localities around China to allow for diversity. Not only could there be different interpretation of policies, the suitability, feasibility and rate of policy uptake would also differ with diverse individuals and/or regions. As such, as heterogeneity increases, it is likely that more and more individuals or regions will be less satisfied with the central government policies (Alesina, 2003, p. 305). Singapore, by virtue of its size being small, does not have the issue to deal with problems of delegation to the local governments since she has a reduced diversity of preferences.

### 5.2.5.3 Tradeoff of Size

Taking into consideration of both negative and positive factors that come with China's size, a tradeoff between benefits of size (Refer to Section 5.2.5.1: Size as China's Advantage) and the increased heterogeneity of preferences (Refer to Section 5.2.5.2: Size as China's Advantage) is likely.

Therefore, if the drawbacks could be minimized or controlled to such an extent that the benefits largely outweigh the negatives, then China today would be in a better position as compared to Singapore then to adopt the 'Singapore Model'.

As mentioned in Section 5.2.5.2, China's size largely increases the 'heterogeneity of preferences'. However, a couple of circumstances surrounding the 'Singapore Model' and its implementation actually control the 'heterogeneity of preferences'. Firstly, the 'Singapore Model' is a model that appeals to the majority of the population. The 'Singapore Model' embraces diversity of race, culture and language by providing everyone with a fair opportunity to succeed. Secondly, the 'Singapore Model' is a top-down approach in an authoritarian regime. Since the implementation of the model relies on the political capital and political will of the authoritarian elites, it could be said that the preferences of ordinary party members and the public are relatively less important as compared to the democratic regimes. Furthermore, with the average Chinese still largely concern about the livelihood issues, the 'Singapore Model' might offer the right answer to provide them with a fair opportunity to earn a living and succeed and therefore supporting its adoption.

Nonetheless, President Xi and his team will still have to rely on local governments as the delegation of responsibilities will likely reduce the central government's control and



increase unpredictability in the proper implementation of policies needed for the 'Singapore Model' to take shape. While reduced control and increased unpredictability might imply that President Xi and his team will need more time and effort in ensuring the proper implementation of the 'Singapore Model' in China, it takes nothing away from the fact that the socio-economic and political conditions that China face today are strikingly similar or even better than what Singapore had then in the 1950s and 1960s.

#### 5.2.6 A Matter of Political Will

Although the conditions might be similar, the striking difference with the two sets of conditions is the political will. Then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and his "exceptional team with members such as Goh Keng Swee, S. Rajaratnam, Othman Wok, Hon Sui Sen, Lim Kin San, Toh Chin Chye, Ong Pang Boon, Devan Nair, and quite a number more (Tan, 2015)" had the political capital and political will to effect unpopular yet beneficial long-term decisions that had over time cumulated into the 'Singapore Model'.

Today, President Xi Jinping is seen as the most powerful leader in China since Mao Zedong. As the President of China, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China and the Chairman of the Central Military Commission, he assumes all the three top posts of the party and the military only after two years in office. Recently, his "tigers and flies" campaign has further resulted in the rapid centralization of power in his hands (Leung, 2015) while wiping out many power bases of his opposite factions.

As the paramount leader, President Xi Jinping undoubtedly has the political capital like then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew did in 1959. While President Xi's "tigers and flies" campaign have been carried ostensibly to curb corruption, the campaign is deemed unfair as only opposition "tigers" were nabbed. Therefore, despite having the political capital,

the jury is still out to whether he has the political will to effect tough reforms to adopt the 'Singapore Model'. If President Xi and subsequent political elites do indeed have that political will, China can become a large Singapore.

### **5.3 How can China be a Large Singapore?**

While China have the conditions and hence the potential to become a large Singapore, it still has to undergo virtuous cycle of reforms towards adopting the 'Singapore Model' in China. To become a large Singapore, China will have to abide by the values of Multiracialism, Meritocracy, Rule of Law, Equality and Integrity.

It is interesting to note that the five values and principles should not be considered as dichotomous variables but continuous variables instead. The adoption of each of the values and principles of the 'Singapore Model' does not necessarily move at the same speed or in one direction. However, positive movement towards the proper adoption of each of these values and principles would not only improve social harmony, create a more open, attractive and predictable business environment and a relatively fairer chance for everyone to succeed, but it will also reinforce the political capital and legitimacy back at the hands of the reformers. With such moves, the reformers would then have more political capital and will to continue reforms that will further benefit the Chinese public, gain more political capital and legitimacy for the reforms thereby reinforcing the virtuous cycle. In short, the adoption of the 'Singapore Model' would be beneficial both for the ruling elites and the majority of the Chinese public.

Of the five values identified earlier on, the Chinese Communist Party should focus on the problems in relation to the rule of law and corruption first. This is because a reliable and fair legal system that is free from corruption is the fundamental base for Multiracialism,

Meritocracy and Equality.

### 5.3.1 Realizing Rule of Law in China

While the "rule of law" and the "rule by law" are different, they are not entirely a separate concept. In fact, the "rule by law" is a subset of the "rule of law". Therefore, if we were to place Chinese legal system in a continuum (Lee, 2011), it could be seen that the society would move towards the "Rule by Law" first before embracing the "Rule of Law", like how Singapore did in the early days.

Rule of Law reforms are a long and arduous process. In the short run, the Chinese legal system needs to clarify its law, increase the transparency of the legal system, and revise laws to remove or redraft outlaws. To maintain "law and order" and to fight crime in general, criminal laws should be revised to expand the protection of basic rights in criminal procedure codes, modify criminal statutes to cover 21st century problems and enhance better regulation of the police (Zakaria, 1997). Also, legal institutions need to be strengthened to make them more competent, efficient and accountable. To do so, there should be increased training and revised salaries for judges, legal staff and law enforcement personnel. Ethic codes and professional standards should be reviewed and toughened to improve their professionalism. There should be increased access to courts, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, and better dissemination of judicial decisions.

In the long term, China should make the transition from the "Rule by Law" towards the "Rule of Law" by increasing the Communist Party Personnel's compliance with the law. To achieve judicial independence, government officials need to cultivate the norms of equality before the law. Further institutional reforms could be set in place to increase the transparency and accountability of the judiciary to enhance judicial independence. With

judicial independence, it would then form the backbone of a system of check and balances that would allow the society to move towards a more equal and a better meritocratic society that is not based on ethnic lines.

### 5.3.2 Realizing Integrity in China

Credited to Xi Jinping's administration, not only is the anti-graft combat a top priority, the battle is also well underway. Complimentary to the legal reforms to fight crime, anti-corruption efforts by the CCDI is the second-line of defense to weed out corrupt officials and change the corrupt culture of everyday life. Despite achieving some successes in its anti-corruption battle, the current system still faces a couple of problems which are appended below:

#### 1) Institutionalization of anti-graft

Currently, the inspection system relies on inspection tours, stationing and spot checks to detect corrupt officials. In order to eradicate its problems, a more robust and institutionalized system needs to be established to deal with the endemic corruption.

#### 2) Centralization of power in the Central Commission for Discipline and Inspection

With Wang's appointment in 2012, there has been a rapid centralization of power in the Central Commission for Discipline and Inspection. While the centralization of power strengthens vertical supervision, it raises the concern on the lack of check and balances to constrain the power of the Central Commission for Discipline and Inspection.

#### 3) Problematic Horizontal Supervision

Though vertical supervision is strengthened, the flawed horizontal supervision is still left untouched. Having the same level of Investigation Commission under the payroll and

appraisal of the Party Committee, with whom they are supposed to monitor, this means that the Investigation Commission is still susceptible to unhealthy external influence from the Party Committee.

#### 4) Selective Campaign

As mentioned previously, observers posited a different interpretation towards the current "tigers and flies" campaign. Due to the fact that the "tigers" hunted are political opponents of President Xi Jinping (The Economist, 2013), it waits to be seen if such a phenomenon is a matter of coincidence or a consolidation of power under the guise of anti-corruption.

In the short term, China needs to continue embarking on its campaign to uproot endemic corruption. However, the secretive process of investigating the corruption cases needs to be more transparent and more comprehensive to cover not only President Xi's political opponents but all party officials. In the long term, the Chinese Communist Party needs to increase the independence of the anti-corruption agency, institutionalize anti-graft measures, and remove the horizontal appraisal and budgetary process of the dual leadership system.

#### 5.3.3 Realizing Meritocracy in China

As explained previously, China has had a long history of meritocratic culture. With the foundation built through the rule of Law reforms and anti-corruption campaigns, unfair external influence that distorts merit-based decisions and allocations would be minimized. In the short run, China should concentrate more on achieving the formal equality of opportunity. One of the urgent issues includes the reform of the Hukou Household Registration system to allow for labor mobility and to reduce the disparity in

the education system. In the long run, China would then need to focus its attention on more substantive issues such as leveling the playing ground for its people through controlling the income disparity gap, providing better healthcare and housing plans for those in need and etc.

#### 5.3.4 Realizing Multiracialism in China

For multiracial countries like Singapore and China, racial issues are potential lightning rods. While racial harmony is not something that can be built or cultivated overnight, conflict along racial lines can stir emotions and spark a racial conflict in an instant. To achieve racial harmony, it is a long process of racial integration and trust building between the different ethnic groups. Not only are the racial issues very sensitive, they are also very political in nature. In the case of the Chinese elites, the issues of exclusion from political involvement, inequitable development, the loss of cultural identity, and affirmative policies need to be addressed.

With regard to the political involvement, there needs to be a gradual increase and co-optation of the minorities at both provincial and central levels so that their interests are represented. Affirmative policies that provide minorities an unfair advantage needs to be repealed as these policies run against meritocratic ideals. In addition, more substantive policies could be introduced to level the playing ground and to elevate the inequitable development, while avoiding ethnic lines.

To promote racial harmony, the enforcement of the racial policies should be implemented to actively promote racial integration instead of racial segregation. Segregation along racial lines could only lead to the buildup of distrust and frustration that would eventually reach the breaking point. Conversely, active integration and interaction would go a long

way to build trust and harmony.

As observed in the separatist movements in China, the destruction of culture is viewed as one of the main reasons for such uprisings. This is because perceived cultural destruction can bring about the inner righteous anger (Sautman, 2013) at the purported victimization of the people by a powerful state. Nationalists and separatists' movements often gather local and international support through such moral grievances - even when there is not any ethnic oppression. Therefore, for China to remedy the situation, the Chinese Communist Party should not only protect the culture and language of the ethnic minorities, but also engage in celebrations of such cultural diversities as part of its varied cultural heritage.

## **6 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this thesis has shown that China does indeed have the socioeconomic and political conditions and hence possess the potential to become a large Singapore; a large country that abides by the values and principles of Multiracialism, Rule of Law, Meritocracy, Equality and Integrity.

Politically, both China today and Singapore in the 1950s/1960s belong to one party states with a Confucian value system, a culture of meritocracy, and a centralized bureaucracy that is ruled by law. Economically, both are third world developing countries, plagued by rampant corruption, with comparable GDP per capita, growth rates and GINI coefficient (Singapore unemployment Rate was higher). Socially, both countries experience rising social and racial conflicts within its multi-ethnic and multi-religious population.

Multiracialism: In its early days, Singapore had an ethnically diverse population plagued by racial conflicts. As such the government saw the need to eradicate racial discrimination through the adoption of the multiracialism principle. With similar circumstances, President Xi's Administration could restore harmony in its multi-ethnic multi-religious society by abiding the principle of Multiracialism to prevent further ethnic violence due to alleged and/or actual ethnic discriminations.

Meritocracy: Like Singapore then, China today have similar conditions which also need to adopt the principle of meritocracy. With elements of Meritocratic practices in a largely Confucian society (for both Singapore then and China today), the reinforcement of the ideals of Meritocracy is necessary where "societal advancements are based on individuals' ability and efforts (Arneson, 2015)"; establish a "self-reliant society" which would provide everyone with a fair opportunity to succeed, regardless of race, religion or



social status; deploy the best man for the job and create a favorable business climate to attract investments.

Rule of Law: For the two countries, Singapore then and China today, both need to maintain order in a society plagued by rising social and ethnic conflicts while minimizing arbitrary rule and creating a predictable business climate to attract investors. Drawing inspiration from his legal background, then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew capitalized on his law education while President Xi extracted from the Ancient Chinese Philosopher Han Feizi's legalism, both set of ruling elites turned to the Rule of law. While Singapore transited from the 'Rule by Law' first to achieve "law and order' before achieving 'Rule of Law', China today has also followed Singapore's footsteps by implementing "Rule by Law" since 2012 and with an eye towards the "Rule of Law" in the future.

Integrity: Similar to Singapore in the 1950s/1960s, China today faces challenges emerging from rampant corruption at all levels of the society. With the need to improve party legitimacy, create a favorable business climate and provide everyone with a fair opportunity to succeed, upholding the integrity principle - that integrity and moral leadership is the precursor to good governance - would seem logical for the ruling elites of both countries. While Singapore is largely corruption-free today, China still has a long way to go as she has only resumed the anti-graft battle with its intense "tigers and flies" anti-corruption campaign.

Despite having the favorable conditions to adopt the fundamental values of the 'Singapore Model', one of the most important difference and often-cited barrier for China is the size. However, China's size in reality is a double-edged sword. Because of its huge size, China is endowed with rich natural resources, huge domestic market, great international

influence, lower per capita costs of public goods, potentially better internalization of externality and more equitable redistributive policies. However, such benefits arrive with a trade-off of increased heterogeneity of preferences that results in higher unpredictability and reduced controllability. Since the 'Singapore Model' is formulated as a top-down approach that appeals to the majority of the population in an authoritarian regime with significant political will, it would be fair to say that such diversity of preferences would seem manageable. Also, with the effective distances lowered in the 21st century, the reduced control and increased unpredictability due to size can be further compensated by putting in more time and effort.

As such, controlling the negatives arising from the size, the net effect might tilt in favor of China, leaving the political will as the major obstacle for China to adopt the 'Singapore Model'. Though Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and his People's Action Party had the political capital and political will to effect unpopular but beneficial decisions in good faith, the same could not be applied to President Xi yet. Despite being the most powerful Chinese leader since Mao Zedong, President Xi has not displayed any evidence of political will to make tough decisions.

In conclusion, China has a similar and arguably even better set of conditions as compared to Singapore in the 1950s/1960s. While China has the conditions and can be a large Singapore, it largely depends on the political will of the Chinese leadership to effect far-reaching reforms. To be a large Singapore, reforms will then have to be enforced to embrace the values and principles of the 'Singapore Model' - Multiracialism, Meritocracy, Equality, Rule of law and Integrity.

China can be a large Singapore. Whether they want to be, only time will tell.

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## Abstract (Korean)

### 국 문 초 록

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학과 및 전공: 국제학과 국제협력전공

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본 논문에서는 과연 중국이 ‘싱가포르 모델’을 적용할 수 있는 조건들을 갖추고 있는지에 대해 살펴보고자 하였다. 중국의 많은 관심과 연구에도 불구하고, 싱가포르 모델에 대한 기존 연구는 해당 모델의 정의에 대한 전반적인 합의가 부족하고, 오늘날의 싱가포르를 가능케 한 본질에 대한 논의 없이 특정 요소에만 편중하고 있다는 점에서 한계가 있다. 따라서 본 연구는 싱가포르 모델에 대한 이해를 돕기 위한 새로운 분석틀을 제시하고자 하였다. 특히, 본 연구는 싱가포르 모델을 능력주의(meritocracy), 다인종주의(multiracialism), 청렴성(integrity), 법의 지배(the rule of law), 그리고 평등(equality)이라는 5 가지의 근본 원리를 통해 살펴보고 있다.

먼저, 싱가포르 모델은 1950 년대와 1960 년대 싱가포르가 직면했던 당시의 조건들과 어려움, 그리고 이를 통해 현재의 싱가포르로 도약할 수 있었던 방법을 이해하기 위해 적용될 수 있다. 나아가, 본 연구는 싱가포르 모델을 가능케 했던 이러한 조건들을 현재 중국의 상황과 비교함으로써, 과연 중국이 싱가포르 모델을 수용할 수 있는지, 커다란 싱가포르가 될 수 있는지에 대해 밝히고자 하였다. 마지막으로 싱가포르 모델을 적용할 수 있는 방안을 제시하였다.

이 때, 이러한 비교 연구는 두 국가가 상당히 비슷한 사회경제적·정치적 조건들을 공유하고 있음을 보여준다. 하지만 중국은 싱가포르 모델을 시행하기에

필요한 유사 조건들을 갖추고 있는 반면, 상대적 크기(size)와 정치적 의지(political will)의 측면에서 싱가포르와 대비되는 것 또한 살펴볼 수 있다.

중국에게 크기 요소는 크다는 점에서 오는 이익 (보다 큰 시장, 큰 국제적 영향력 행사 등)과 다양한 선호도와 이에 따른 이질성의 문제를 모두 가진다는 점에서 양날의 검과 같다. 하지만, 21 세기 중국의 권위주의적 엘리트들은 하향식(top-down)의 싱가포르 모델을 적용함에 있어 중국의 크기가 야기할 수 있는 문제와 이익을 적절히 통제·관리할 수 있는 능력을 갖추고 있는 것으로 보인다.

따라서 본 연구는 중국이 1950 년대와 1960 년대의 싱가포르와 유사한 사회경제적·정치적 조건들을 가지고 있다는 것과 크기가 중국에 잠재적인 긍정적 요소로 작용할 수 있다는 것을 고려, 중국의 공산당 지도부가 싱가포르 모델을 시행할 정치적 의지가 있다면, 중국이 커다란 싱가포르로 도약할 수 있음을 시사하고자 한다.

본 논문은 싱가포르 모델의 근본 원리와 이를 시행하기 위해 필요한 조건들을 살펴보았다는 점에서 기존의 연구들과 차별된다. 이러한 과정을 통해, 본 논문은 중국이 싱가포르 모델의 5 가지 근본 원리들을 수용하고 발전시킬 잠재력이 있는가, 나아가 중국이 커다란 싱가포르가 될 수 있을 것인가에 대한 보다 포괄적인 분석 방안을 제시하고자 하였다.

## 핵심어

중국, 평등, 청렴성, 능력주의, 다인종주의, 법의 지배, 싱가포르, 싱가포르 모델, 크기

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